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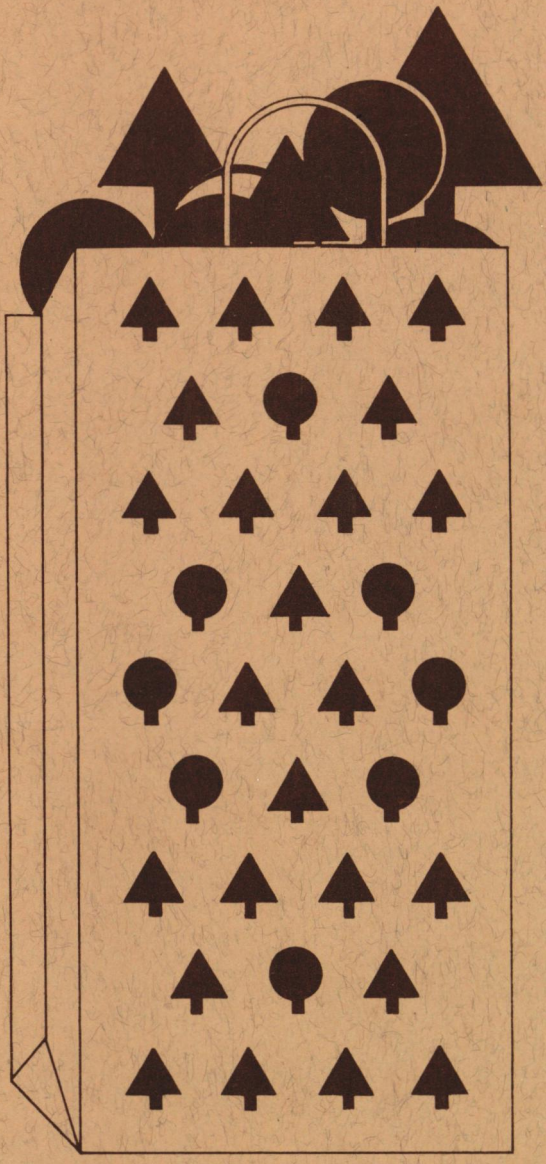
United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
FS-23

Buying National Forest Timber



National Forest Timber Is For Sale

The National Forests of the United States have timber stands with an estimated volume of 1,055 billion board feet (International 1/4-inch log rule). This is the resource base from which annual harvests can be made.

From the Sitka spruce of Alaska to the quick-growing pines of the South, National Forest timber is managed and harvested so that it will produce crops forever.

See the District Ranger or Forest Supervisor

Management of the National Forests, for timber harvest as well as for many other uses, is the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service.

The on-the-ground operating unit, and the key to management of all National Forest resources, is the Ranger District, administered by a District Ranger. The District Ranger and the Forest Supervisor, who has charge of all Ranger Districts in a National Forest, can supply information about buying timber.

The Forest Service Does Not Cut Timber

The Forest Service sells timber to commercial operators or to local residents who depend upon the National Forests for the forest products they need. The information given in this leaflet is for the commercial operator who buys trees on the stump and sells the products in one form or another.

How Much Is Sold?

The sale of National Forest timber has averaged about 12.5 billion board feet per year since 1960. Annual harvest from the National Forests amounts to nearly 30 percent of the sawtimber cut from all forest land in the United States. In 1960, sales of National Forest timber totaled 12.2 billon board feet. In 1970 and 1980, sales totaled 13.4 and 11.4 billion board feet.

Modern logging methods, such as those utilizing helicopters, have made it possible to harvest some National Forest timber that at one time was not considered marketable.

The volume of timber sold is controlled by a Timber Resource Management Plan. The plan allocates the allowable annual harvest for each National Forest. Timber sales are prepared each year under this plan.

What Are the Sale Requirements?

Timber is sold in varying amounts; some sales are for a few hundred board feet, others are for several million. This gives everyone an opportunity to bid on and harvest National Forest timber. About 2,600 sales are made each year.

Sales Are Usually Advertised

The Forest Service is required by law to publicly advertise all timber sales over $10,000 in appraised value for at least 30 days. Sales of timber appraised at under $10,000 may be offered without advertising: however, if there is more than one prospective purchaser, such sales are usually advertised, but often for less than 30 days. Advertisements specify such items as the date and place of bidding, location of sale, volume and species offered for sale, and minimum bid price acceptable.

Bidders Are Encouraged to Examine Timber

Prospective bidders are encouraged to examine the timber and make their own estimates of the volume and value before bidding. Sample timber sale contracts are available for review by prospective bidders in the offices of the District Ranger or the Forest Supervisor of the National Forest where the sale is to be made.

Deposits Accompany the Bid

The deposits specified in the advertisement must accompany the bid; deposits of unsuccessful bidders are returned. The successful bidder executes a written contract and, in all but the smaller sales, furnishes a performance bond.

Forest Service timber sale contracts provide for a pay-as-you cut operation. Payments are in advance of cutting; the bid deposit serves as the first advance payment in advertised sales.

What Are the Cutting Requirements?

Cutting of timber must be done in accordance with contract requirements. These requirements provide for the protection and enhancement of other resources on the sale area such as wildlife, forage, water, soil, and recreation. The logging must also be done in a manner to protect remaining trees or to prepare the site for the growth of new trees. All these requirements are made from an assessment of the effect that cutting the timber will have on the total sale area environment. For each sale the Forest Service prepares an Environmental Assessment Report or an Environmental Impact Statement as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

After careful planning, the timber is marked or otherwise designated for cutting. The required harvest methods leave cutover areas in good condition for future growth. Roadbuilding in varying amounts, depending upon the size of the sale, is required of the purchaser, except on smaller sales. The estimated costs of the roadbuilding, erosion prevention and control, and similar items are taken into consideration in appraising the timber. The amount of time allowed for harvesting operations is specified in the contract.

Where to Get Information

Specific Areas

If you want to buy National Forest timber and need information on specific areas or boundaries of timber, go to your District Ranger, if there is one in your locality. Or if the office of the Forest Supervisor is closer to you, go there. The District Ranger or the Forest Supervisor has a schedule of timber sales usually listed on a "sale announcement." The sale announcement shows sales that are planned for the next 6 months or more.

If you do not know where National Forest headquarters are located, write to the Chief, Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 2417, Washington, D.C. 20013, or to a regional headquarters and ask for a copy of FS-13, Field Offices of the Forest Service. This publication gives names and locations of National Forests, by State.

General Information

Each of the nine Regions of the Forest Service has a Regional Forester with jurisdiction over all the National Forests in the Region. The Regional Forester can supply information on larger sales offered in the Region and on general timber sale opportunities and requirements.

The address of the nine regional headquarters and the area included in each Region are listed below. States containing no National Forest land are omitted. Write to the Regional Forester, Forest Service, United States Department Agriculture, at one of the addresses given.

Northern Region: Federal Bldg., Missoula, MT 59807.
Montana, northern Idaho, North Dakota, and northwest South Dakota.

Rocky Mountain Region: 11177 W. 8th Ave., Box 25127, Lakewood, CO 80225.
Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming (except western part), and South Dakota (except northwestern part).

Southwestern Region: 517 Gold Ave. S.W., Albuquerque, NM 87102.
Arizona and New Mexico.

Intermountain Region: 324 25th St., Odgen UT 84401.
Southern Idaho, Nevada, Utah, and western Wyoming.

Pacific Southwest Region: 630 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111.
California

Pacific Northwest Region: 319 SW Pine St., P.O. Box 3623, Portland OR 97208.
Oregon and Washington

Eastern Region: 633 West Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53203.
Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

Southern Region: 1720 Peachtree Road, NW, Altanta, GA 30309.

Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia; also Puerto Rico.

Alaska Region: Federal Office Bldg., Box 1628, Juneau, AK 99802.

Southeastern Alaska.

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